

Statement of Representative Henry A. Waxman on H. Res. 921
Condemning the recent attacks against the State of Israel,
holding terrorists and their state-sponsors responsible for such attacks,
and supporting Israel's right to defend itself.

July 19, 2006

Mr. Speaker, it is a tragedy that we have come to this point today, watching the spiral of hostilities between Israel and its neighbors.

Although Israel withdrew completely from Lebanon in 2000, and the UN Security Council certified the withdrawal to internationally recognized borders, Hezbollah still refuses to accept peace.

Although Israel has removed all its settlers from Gaza and has been working with President Abbas to negotiate additional concessions, Hamas is still unwilling to lay down its weapons, accept Israel's legitimate existence, and come to the table to negotiate the creation of a peaceful Palestinian state.

When Hamas and Hezbollah leaders were elected to be part of the emerging democratic governments, some hoped they would focus on leading the Palestinian and Lebanese people to fulfill their aspirations of a stable and prosperous future.

Instead, the terrorists have pursued only their own aspirations of regional instability and the destruction of Israel.

Kidnapping soldiers does nothing to promote the welfare of the Lebanese and Palestinian people. Missile attacks don't develop the economy or expand freedom of movement or provide access to health care and education.

Terrorism has only brought suffering to the people of Gaza and Lebanon, and these attacks serve no one but the terrorists and their state sponsors.

We must recognize the role of Syria and Iran in this conflict, and the threat they pose to Israel, the United States, and the entire Middle East.

Though it has been unwilling or unable to do so, the world must insist that the Lebanese government take control of its borders and disarm the terrorists within them as required by the Road Map and the U.N. Security Council.

Israel has made every effort to avoid civilian casualties, and those that have occurred are tragic. But Israel's best efforts to spare civilians stand in sharp contrast to the terrorists' deliberate efforts to target Israeli civilians as they drink their morning coffee or head off to school and work.

Acts like these leave Israel no choice but to break down the terrorists' capacity to carry them out. Israel has targeted stockpiles of missiles procured from Syria and Iran and blocked the routes through which the terrorists would rearm. It is Hamas and Hezbollah who have cruelly decided to place these stockpiles among civilians, again putting the political and strategic needs of terror above those of the people they claim to represent.

Israel is not the source of instability and danger. Israel withdrew from Lebanon and Gaza in pursuit of peace. The terrorist regimes in the region have pursued other ends. Israel has every right as a sovereign nation to defend its cities from unprovoked cross-border attacks and to seek the safe, swift, and unconditional return of its soldiers.